

Vets4InformedChoice.org

Promoting Awareness of the Evidence Base
for Veterinary Medicine and Practice

Hi there

Vets4InformedChoice has been set up to raise awareness of the Evidence Base (or lack of) for many current Veterinary Practices. We aim to enable animal owners and guardians to make considered responsible choices without undue pressure from the Veterinary Industry.



The Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons are taking away your right to make Informed Choices for your Pet.

Animal Owners and Guardians rely on their Vet to give impartial, ethical and evidence-based opinion for the benefit of the Animal(s) in their care.

The Vet's governing body, the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons, has however, just recently (3rd November), published a truly unbelievable statement, effectively taking away Vets' and Owners' rights to make an informed choice about how best to treat the animals in their care. Instead they want Vets to prescribe only those medicines first that are provided via the Pharmaceutical Industry, irrespective of

a client's wishes and the Vet's clinical opinion as to the best course of action to take. If Vets don't comply, they may well take action against the Vet concerned and arguably the animal owner may well face prosecution on welfare grounds.

What follows is how you can make your views known, then the RCVS Statement, followed by a response from the British Association of Homeopathic Veterinary Surgeons. It's quite long but read on to find out more. It is a truly terrifying attack on the rights of animal guardians, and the ability of Vets to treat the animals they are asked to care for, that will have far-reaching consequences

We are sure most owners of animals, and subscribers to vets4InformedChoice will be appalled at the RCVS and will wish to write to them.

Here's how you can help:

1. Emails expressing concern and wishing to raise questions for the RCVS should be sent to president@rcvs.org.uk

2. Please **share** this mail with everyone you can via your email list and FB.

3. Please sign this petition started by an unknown concerned member of the public. The petition does not mention that ALL alternative practices could be affected, not just homeopathy. This statement implies your vet could not give acupuncture, homeopathy, or probably most supplements to your dog if it is stiff, but must give drugs irrespective of any potential side-effects they may cause <https://www.thepetitionsite.com/219/768/240/we-need-to-stop-the-rcvs-from-banning-homeopathic-vets-from-treating-animals>

In just one day the petition has been signed by more people than the anti-homeopathy campaign within the Vet Profession managed to gain, despite coverage in the national media, in 6 months of trying

4. If new to this list then please visit www.vets4informedchoice.org and sign up to our email list for updates as the situation evolves. This is a new site that explores the evidence for conventional and alternative medicines in animals. The site will be expanding rapidly over the next few months.

5. Please visit bahvs.com – the website of the British Association of Veterinary Surgeons (BAHVS). There you can read the statement issued by the BAHVS in response to the council's statement. The statement is also shown below. Traffic helps raise the impact factor of the website and thus also the BAHVS who are a great group of dedicated, hard-working Vets. They also have a Facebook page you can follow <https://www.facebook.com/BritishAssociationofHomeopathicVeterinarySurgeons>

6. Visit your local MP and raise awareness of the issue and your concerns

7. If you have connections, are a journalist, an activist, a politician or just deeply care about freedom of choice and animals, and want to help, please contact sec@bahvs.com

The RCVS Council Position Statement

"We have recently been asked questions about complementary and alternative medicines and treatments in general and homeopathy in particular. We would like to highlight our commitment to promoting the advancement of veterinary

medicine upon sound scientific principles and to re-iterate the fundamental obligation upon our members as practitioners within a science-based profession which is to make animal welfare their first consideration.

In fulfilling this obligation, we expect that treatments offered by veterinary surgeons are underpinned by a recognised evidence base or sound scientific principles. Veterinary surgeons should not make unproven claims about any treatments, including prophylactic treatments.

Homeopathy exists without a recognised body of evidence for its use. Furthermore, it is not based on sound scientific principles. In order to protect animal welfare, we regard such treatments as being complementary rather than alternative to treatments for which there is a recognised evidence base or which are based in sound scientific principles.

It is vital to protect the welfare of animals committed to the care of the veterinary profession and the public's confidence in the profession that any treatments not underpinned by a recognised evidence base or sound scientific principles do not delay or replace those that do."

The Response from the British Association of Homeopathic Veterinary Surgeons

We are deeply disappointed that the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS) has chosen to step outside its remit and make such an ill-considered and misinformed statement regarding Complementary and Alternative Medicines (CAM) in general, and

Homeopathy in particular.

The RCVS mission statement is “Setting, upholding and advancing the educational, ethical and clinical standards of Veterinary Surgeons and Veterinary Nurses”

In making this statement on CAM the RCVS fails its mission on so many levels, but in particular when one considers ethics.

The RCVS failed to consult at all with stakeholders actually involved in CAM, despite representations to be so consulted, before considering and issuing their statement. This failure is contrary to the usual manner in which the RCVS conducts itself.

It is commonly accepted that it is not the role of a regulator to seek to influence clinical judgement nor to resolve differences of scientific opinion. The RCVS has stated many times that it does not get involved. Yet the current RCVS Council has seemingly, willingly, allowed itself to be seduced by a belief-based irresponsible diatribe from a vocal minority into a precedent-setting restriction of the clinical freedoms the profession has always enjoyed. In doing so it has ignored advice from its own advising committees and it has embarked on a course that will stifle future innovation, research and evolution of new treatment modalities.

It is perhaps no coincidence that it should do so when there is an explosion of interest in CAM, including Homeopathy, in the agricultural sector where the drive is to reduce and replace dependence on antibiotics in light of Antibiotic Resistance (AMR) concerns, and some of the most successful methods so far are proving to be those defined as CAM. It is fact that some of the largest “conventional” veterinary practices in the UK dealing with animal

production for food are the ones leading the way on this, seeking out treatments as “alternative”, and Homeopathy is proving one of the successful modalities. In singling out the issue of prophylactic treatments - the very use of CAM for which in agriculture significantly threatens the finances of the Pharmaceutical Industry - the RCVS puts itself into a position where it can be accused of putting profits before probity, and corporations before conscience - or is it just naïve and completely out of touch?

The RCVS statement and the associated debates, have created a moral imperative for many mainstream practices of the profession to be publicly examined in detail. We are sure over the coming weeks, months and years there will be uncomfortable times ahead for all branches of the profession. It is just not acceptable for the mainstream body of vets to claim the moral high ground when the evidence base for much of Veterinary Science is poor at best. There is plenty of evidence of poor and demonstrably harmful practices ignored in the modern corporate world in favour of targets and profitability. Industry business journals even run articles on “mining” the best clients for cash.

History tells us that to question the RCVS and the status quo is a dangerous path. In making the statement as it has, regarding CAM in general and Homeopathy in particular, the RCVS has shown its lack of consideration for those affected. This includes those who own and care for animals where their freedom of choice may be restricted. What of patients already on treatments they may now be denied? There is no published impact assessment or route to compensation for those whose practices are now suffering. In creating a complainant’s charter, the RCVS Council must accept that it needs to face up to questions of its own. It is arguably now

complicit in deception of the public, which its very existence is meant to protect.

So what of the evidence argument against CAM? There is in fact very good evidence for much of CAM, including and especially Homeopathy, with many peer-reviewed papers in a number of Journals. However, these papers are routinely ignored by the establishment as they are published in CAM journals. This is bizarre when one considers that a parasitologist will publish in a journal of parasitology, a pharmacist in a journal of pharmacology, so why not a homeopath in the journal “Homeopathy”?

A level playing field regarding evidence it is not. The bar is raised so high by the RCVS for CAM that it can never compete. Funding for research has been historically blocked by bodies such as the BVA. When the mainstream journals are sponsored by Big Pharma and other vested interests, so that Editors dare not publish CAM papers, it is unfair and corrupt to criticise CAM in this way. The RCVS's own Science Committee in this debate noted that the evidence base for a number of accepted “conventional” treatments is lacking so why pick on CAM, which has as good if not better in place, and is not subject to the same fallacies that can contaminate the most prestigious journals when researcher and publisher bias and fraud are led by the money men?

Clients actively seek out CAM therapies for their animals as conventional medicines regularly fail or produce unacceptable side effects. Homeopathy has previously been recognised in the RCVS register as having a specialist qualification (it still does), and is independently examined and regulated, which is perhaps why it attracts the most ire of the CAM options. Homeopathy is in fact provided for in UK and EU Legislation. It is required to be available, cannot be banned

without a change in the Law, and it behoves the profession to embrace it, even if in the minority.

A witch-hunt has been conducted on an unprecedented scale in the profession. This has been aided by the support on social media of some Past Presidents of the RCVS and BVA, RCVS Council members and by the profession's media chiefs. It is time for it to stop. It discredits those making and supporting the attacks on colleagues, discredits the profession and, by disseminating false conclusions to the media, adds to the growing and damaging public distrust of science and of our profession.

The RCVS sits at the very core of our profession. It has to be the ethical face of the profession and has to set an example to the profession. In this case it falls far short of the high standard it should project.

In making such a statement as it now has, the RCVS has lost all credibility in the Evidence Based Medicine debate, and has eschewed the moral integrity required to regulate the profession. Its statement should be withdrawn immediately.

[Website](#)

Kind regards,
Jack Hoare MRCVS, co-Founder

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